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# A Blending of Purpose: The Juxtaposition of Functional and Aesthetic Qualities in Pots of Use.

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*East Tennessee State University*

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# *A Blending of Purpose:*

## THE JUXTAPOSITION OF FUNCTIONAL AND AESTHETIC QUALITIES IN POTS OF USE



A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ART AND  
DESIGN OF EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN CERAMICS

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BY JESSA DECKER-SMITH  
DECEMBER 2004

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DON DAVIS, CHAIR  
BLAIR WHITE  
DAVID LOGAN

KEYWORDS: CERAMICS, FUNCTIONAL POTTERY, AESTHETICS, UTILITARIAN, *LIFE* QUALITY, INDIAN ARCHITECTURE,  
DAN FINNEGAN, KEN SEDBERRY, NICK JOERLING

## *Abstract*

This thesis supports the Master of Fine Arts exhibition entitled *A Blending of Purpose* at East Tennessee State University, Carroll Reece Museum, Johnson City, Tennessee, November 4 – 22, 2004. It discusses the artist's desire to create exceptionally crafted functional work that focuses on both compelling aesthetics and strong utilitarian considerations. Topics include the artistic validity of functional works, aesthetic and functional qualities, tactile sensation as a consideration, machine-made works versus hand-made works, a characteristic described as the *Life Quality*, and the piece's completion in use.

The artist examines her influences including work ceramists Dan Finnegan, Nick Joerling, and Ken Sedberry, as well as form and design elements found in the art and architecture of India.

Practical application in form and process of these ideas and influences is discussed.



## *Dedication*

To my mom, your faithful attention to the practical has inspired me to be an artist.

To my husband, your faithful attention to the practical has allowed me to be an artist.

Your love and kindness sustain me.



## *Acknowledgments*

For being invaluable to my development as an artist I must thank Don Davis, Jane Renfroe, Dan Finnegan, Ann Wells.  
You are my teachers, and your lessons live in every pot I make.

I thank Blair White and David Logan who gave the inventive critique and advice of two metal smiths  
and thereby improved my ceramic designs.

To my sisters...you are my women! You have proven repeatedly that you can do anything  
and I know I will be awed by all that you do.

For years of support and friendship I thank Tommy and Selena. Let's keep living our lives the same but in reverse.

I received unending support and encouragement from friends and family too numerous to name.  
I love and thank you all.



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## *Artist's Statement*

On a Wednesday morning not long ago, a woman drove up to me on the street, rolled down her passenger side window, and told me her son drank orange juice that morning out of a cup I made for a local coffeehouse. That is why my work exists. I want someone's child to enjoy OJ out of one of my cups. I create work for people to take into their homes and use to feed their families.

My work exists as I hope I do,  
to add brightness and ease to life,  
to assist,  
to serve,  
to comfort,  
to celebrate,  
to enliven.

My work is constantly influenced by innumerable stimuli. Outwardly, many of my forms and designs are inspired by the forms and designs of the art and architecture of India. Inwardly, as I create, I take into account how a child's small hand might maneuver a lid on a cookie jar, or how to best create a tea setting to invite a whole family to have tea together.

It's about connection.



## Chapter 1: Introduction

My mother is a gifted artist who never grants herself time or permission to fully give in to her talents.

Though she tries to quell these artistic urges in the name of pragmatism, they are not hidden. She is constantly creating. From the charcoal drawings she made of her children in different stages of their growth to the metal and driftwood sculptures that have taken up residence in the garden of her beachside home, innate creativity flows through her veins, whether she intends it to come out or not.

Her gifts inspire me to respond to my own artistic tendencies in the opposite manner. I intend to spend the bulk of my time and energy in pursuit of creative outlet. That intention has guided me to my current situation, a life where art is not relegated to *spare* time.

There have been many steps leading me to this fate. An immeasurably important one is my introduction to the world of clay. I took my first clay class as a freshman in college and felt an immediate natural connection and ease with the medium. Jane Renfro, my instructor for that beginning throwing class and the courses that followed it, allowed me to freely explore the clay and its possibilities and gave constant encouragement and challenging engagement. She is a skilled potter who makes beautiful functional ware, which I am proud to have and use in my home. Her emphasis on functionality has revealed itself as an important aspect of my work.



I met another important influence during this time – my husband, who joined me in my second clay class at Mars Hill College by coincidence, and our love for clay and each other grew. Following graduation, we enrolled in numerous clay classes together at Vanderbilt University. These were fairly informal, non-credit courses that served us primarily by allowing us to keep our hands in the clay.

It was during our time at Vanderbilt that my need to make my artistic endeavors a more central part of my life became apparent. It was impossible to ignore. I found myself scrambling to get into the studio at any spare moment, often working there late into the night, because my days were obligated to my job. Something felt troubling about this manner of scheduling, and I knew there needed to be a change. Near the end of our time there I decided to apply to the Master of Fine Arts program at East Tennessee State University, a possibility I saw as a long shot, considering I had no BFA, a program requirement. To my surprise and elation, I was admitted.

Prior to beginning my masters work at ETSU, I enrolled in a summer session class at Penland School of Craft called *Good Pots for Good Food*, and met an important influence to my artistic career, Dan Finnegan, who taught me two critical lessons; first, that functionality is an important consideration in the making of good pots, and second, that I really could do it (that is, go to graduate school and be a potter). He spoke of "...the sweet magic that occurs when good food and good pots come together..." and that magic intrigued me and still does. I would only add one element to that equation, the user. The comfort and ease of the consumer is a vital consideration in my work.



My time at ETSU has offered me valuable exposure to other potters. Don Davis, ETSU ceramics instructor, has taught me the value of quality craftsmanship and construction as well as helping me to hone my technical skills and eye for design. I value his critique of my work as a resource in learning how to look at it myself and be both critical and kind to my own creations. I have also had the honor of watching demonstrations and hearing the techniques, tips, and philosophies of many other potters including Mark Peters, Patty Wouters, Ken Sedberry, and Ron Meyers, all of whom use varying methods to create beautiful pots. Their input has been invaluable to the evolution of my work.

Since my very first introduction to clay, I have felt at home. Though I will continually be challenged by the medium, I feel a comfort with it and a desire to continue to work out my own vision within it. I have been asked how I know that clay is the medium for me. To that I respond that it is something I can not exactly put my finger on, but whenever I have stopped making pots for a time, during a break in semesters or the end of a throwing cycle, the moment I sit at the wheel again and put my hands around the clay I think, “This is what I’ve been missing.” My body feels relaxed and my mind at ease, and no matter what stressors I have been combating, a sense of calm comes over me. To know that I can use this medium that enhances my life in such a vital way to hopefully in some small way improve the lives of others, gives me great satisfaction.

I am currently comfortably nestled in my ongoing study of well-crafted, intriguing, functional pots, that I hope people will bring in to their homes and use to feed their families. For a time I felt pressure to rise above functionality to achieve “artness”, but I have since renewed my belief in the value and artistic quality of work that is beautiful, engag-



ing, and also useful. Dan Finnegan is a strong example of this value. He creates work for the people in his community to use in their homes and incorporate into their lives. I wish to do the same.

This paper will show how my intentions have come full circle. My work still exists, as my very first artist statement exclaimed, to add brightness and ease to life, to serve, to comfort, to celebrate, to enliven. Here I will examine how the qualities of functionality and aesthetics work together in the creation of pots of use.



## *Chapter 2: A Defense of Functionality*

“The work of the world is common as mud. Botched, it smears the hands, crumbles to dust.  
But the thing worth doing well done has a shape that satisfies, clean and evident. Greek  
amphoras for wine or oil, Hopi vases that held corn, are put in museums but you know they  
were made to be used. The pitcher cries for water to carry and a person for work that is real.”

~Excerpt from “To Be of Use”  
A poem by Marge Piercy

**F**or some time there has been debate within the ceramic world, and to an extent, within myself, regarding what I see as two schools of ceramics: sculptural and functional. As functional ceramist Michael Cardew stated, “Opinions about hand-made pottery tend to be divided between two extremes – romantic overestimation, and on the other side, a total denial that it can have any useful function.” (Cardew 237) The category of ceramic sculpture in my view holds within it works that could be lumped with the broader class of sculpture in general as well as objects that are pottery or vessel forms but are not functional. Pieces that fall in the sculpture category may not resemble ceramic works at all, further they may not even be recognizable as being constructed of ceramic materials. They are objects that do not represent vessel forms but tackle some other subject matter entirely. The non-functional pottery forms that are



grouped in the sculptural ceramic category are pieces that are obviously crafted from ceramic materials, and contain many of the same vessel themes but are not intended to be put to use by individuals in a utilitarian capacity. The functional school is just that, a group of works that are created with the intention of carrying out a specific function. I have examined works and experimented in both schools, and it is now clear to me that I desire to create works that are visually intriguing and compositionally strong while also serving a specific use.

Striving to create aesthetically pleasing functional work requires many considerations. My first thoughts generally revolve around the visual elements because consideration of the design is required from the outset of creating a piece. I am mindful of the functional aspirations of the work as I am creating it and take those into account throughout the entire process. A third value of the work is somewhat less concrete. Bernard Leach describes it as “beauty in the things that people make when the making is done purely in a celebration of life...I think the final word I would use as a criterion of value in the world of art, if I were reduced to a single word, would be the presence of *life*.” (Leach 26) This is that something extra on top of functional and aesthetic considerations, that makes the piece sing. It is what draws a person to a certain work and allows that work to speak to him or her. In reference to Leach, we will call this factor the *life* quality. And lastly, I consider the completion of the pot to be when it is used. “...Functional pots ultimately become fully realized through the activity of their use. In essence, a functional pot that is not used cannot fulfill its intended purpose and thus is difficult to appreciate.” (Staley 57) In order to discuss the worth of functional pottery, I will examine its aesthetic qualities, functional qualities, the *life* quality, and its completion by use.



## *Aesthetic Qualities*

Aesthetic considerations are essential in the creation of functional pottery. As an artist, it seems almost silly to make this statement because artistic considerations are so basic a part of what I do. They are present at every stage of creation. Even while trying to discern the best construction for functional efficiency, it is necessary to always keep an eye on aesthetics. In fact, it is impossible not to. If I place a spout in a good spot for pouring but it does not add to the artistic design of the piece, it must be modified until it works visually. If not, though the piece may function well, the composition will not work. An example of this in my work came as I attempted to create a casserole dish whose lid also functioned as a serving bowl. This required the knob of the lid to be large enough to work as a foot when turned upside down. Functionally, it worked perfectly and was a very useful design, but visually it was atrocious. This was a case where I focused too much on the functional quality, and the aesthetic aspect suffered.

Ceramist Don Reitz is ultimately concerned with the aesthetic value of his works. He wrote that if a pot “is just to be a utensil, then a person is better off buying a commercial import, a pot made by industry, because it’s cheaper and usually the clay body is better. For me, when I make a pot I deal with it as an image, and hopefully it will enhance the life of the person who uses it.” (Coyne 158). As Reitz suggests it is crucial to deal with each piece first as a visual image. In my work I strive to couple the pleasing visual image with strong functional attributes to create a compelling and useful composition.





## Functional Qualities

After much searching and experimenting I have established that a clear desire in my work is to create pieces that through their use add beauty and ease to people's lives. Functional potter Michael Cardew wrote of the importance of creating works that will serve in the daily lives of others. He said, "This quality is the surest criterion of good pottery, whether the art that made it was conscious or unconscious. If pottery which is made for the everyday uses of the home passes this test, it is art; and this is the field of expression which properly belongs to the potter. If he insists that because he is an artist he must make things for contemplation only, and refuses to supply the needs of daily life, he deprives himself of a main channel for his art, and denies himself the use of its richest medium." (Cardew 250) Though I would not say that anyone who is not making functional pottery is missing something, I agree with Cardew's assessment with regards to my own work. I struggled for a time, feeling pressure to rise above functionality. I tried to force my work in a direction neither I, nor it, wanted to go. I tried to ignore my desire to make pots for people's use and enjoyment, pushing the work onto other paths. The outcome of that endeavor was a body of work without direction or vitality. The pots were simply lifeless and my disdain for this direction showed through in the work. This time of exploration (or what I look back on as a *ruh*) helped to confirm my desire to create exceptionally crafted functional work that focuses on both compelling design and utilitarian considerations.

In the endeavor to create aesthetically strong pots for use, the functional considerations are of essential importance. If the ideal of a work is to provide enjoyment through beauty while being used, this ideal cannot be met if the piece does not provide its service effectively. "A well-designed piece is built to carry out its proper function: a pitcher must pour cleanly, a flower holder should hold flowers in the desired positions, and a teapot cover should stay in place when tea is being poured. The designer must



proportion the several parts so that the intended function is easily carried out.” (Norton 115) It requires a dance of sorts to balance aesthetic considerations with those of functionality, but I have found that often, as I consider correct placement of an addition to serve its functional purpose most effectively, it seems to fit strongest visually in the place it works best functionally.

Two movements that are historically influential to these ideas are the British Arts and Crafts Movement and the Bauhaus School. The British Arts and Crafts Movement (1880-1910) “began primarily as a search for authentic and meaningful styles for the 19th century and as a reaction to the eclectic historicism of the Victorian era and to 'soulless' machine-made production aided by the Industrial Revolution.” (Arts and Crafts Movement Page) The movement “challenged the mass-produced mediocrity of the nineteenth century and reestablished the value of handcrafted work.” (Wilhide 9) The Bauhaus School, an Institute for Art in Germany founded in 1919, built upon the ideas of the British Arts and Crafts Movement and aimed to unite art and technology in attempts to create solutions for the needs of urban planning and architecture primarily. Its Manifesto of 1919 “called for a unity of all the creative arts...and for a reconsideration of the crafts by the artist.” (Dessau xvii) The ideas of the Bauhaus have often been simplified by the statement, *form follows function*. Form refers to the design or aesthetics of the piece, and function to its utilitarian attributes. The ideas of these historical movements support what I strive for in my work; functional integrity and intriguing aesthetic design.

### The Power of Touch

In examining the functional aspects, one of the most important considerations is touch. Touch can be both an aesthetic and functional experience. The tactile sensation offers an additional dimension to the observer’s experience of the piece. The functional aspect of touch is an integral consideration of the potter’s work. I imagine as I create each piece, how it will feel to hold in the hands or place against the lip. The power of touch becomes clear when I watch people choose a mug not by how it looks, but



by how it feels. They will pick up numerous mugs until they find the one that just feels right, which is different for everyone.

“Tactile quality is part of the experience of a work. People like to touch ceramic objects. Drinking or eating from smooth ceramic surfaces makes either activity more pleasurable.” (Nigrosh 110) Similarly, I consider in the glazing process how the surface of the pot will feel. Because I often use oxides, which do not cover the rough surface of the clay like glaze does, I make sure any part that is going to touch the lips is smooth. I try to make the handle a pleasure to hold.

The power of touch also serves to remind the user of the handmade quality of the piece. “Although drawn profiles and photographs give some idea of what a pot may be, it is not until one holds a pot and rotates it in one’s hands to feel the movements and rhythms left by the potter’s fingers that one can begin to appreciate the complexities that may be there.” (Hopper 35) I hope as a person picks up one of my pieces to use it, he or she senses the warmth of my good intentions as I made it.

### Machine vs. Hand

Many consider the purchase of handmade goods to use in the home to be frivolous because of their cost and breakability. While it may be true that machine made products can more efficiently meet the institutional needs of society, for schools, hospitals, and the like, “there will still be the needs of ordinary private homes; and their demands will be as various as the human beings who dwell in them. Among them there will be enough people who enjoy using hand-made pots in their homes to take up the output of those artist potters who make them. The pots may not always be equal in technical quality to the best mass-produced ware, but they will have other qualities which industrial tableware at present lacks.” (Cardew 240) It is impossible for machine made pots to contain the vitality and care which are crafted into handmade pots. As I consider the functional aspects of each pot, I consider the comfort of the user. I imagine how each pot might improve his or her life. This is why the functional considerations are so important.



## *The Life Quality*

**I**n addition to the more obvious considerations of aesthetic and functional characteristics of pottery, it is necessary to examine what Leach referred to as the *life* quality. Potter Linda Arbuckle describes the work of the potter in this way, “Our mission as artists in functional pottery is to make that piece that not only holds coffee, but speaks to the user so that a relationship is forged. I want to make a cup that someone will go to the bottom of the dish drainer to get, that favorite cup that someone cares about because it speaks to them.” (Morgenthal 92) The *life* quality is the part that makes the connection between maker and user. Without it, yes, it would still be possible to make attractive pots that are useful, but as Reitz writes, “there has to be something more, something plus.” (Coyne 158)

So how is this *life* quality achieved? It is a bit more elusive than considering function or concentrating on aesthetically pleasing design elements. I believe it comes from a love for the craft of making pots and a genuine concern and consideration for the individual person who will use each pot. It involves considering his or her visual enjoyment in looking at the piece and physical comfort in using it. In creating works for use in the home, the *life* factor appears when the potter creates with the aspiration of adding joy to someone’s life through his or her work. It is found in the intention to make a connection.



Michael Cardew's insights on the *life* factor have had meaningful impact on the construction of my opinions on the matter.

He believes that a potter

“cannot make things merely as utensils; he makes them as they have the right to be, as things with a life of their own. When a potter not only knows his job but delights in it, when technique and inspiration become identified, the glow of life will begin to appear in his pots...This aspect of pottery is not always discernible to a first casual inspection; but provided it is in daily use it will gradually become visible, just as good character comes to be appreciated only through continued acquaintance. Its presence will fill the gaps between sips of tea or coffee at those moments when the mind, not yet focused on activity, is still in an open and receptive state; and it will minister quietly to the background of consciousness with a friendly warmth, even perhaps on some occasions with a kind of consolation.” (Cardew 250)

I spoke of this warm consoling quality when I first attempted to construct my artist statement many years ago. It read, “Each piece I create has life and meaning of its own. Each has distinct function beyond mere decoration. I want them to be integrated into daily life and used often. They should be noticed and interacted with; picked up and held in the hands regularly. To this end, I want to remember using *Ballerina Teapot* when hosting tea parties with my future children, and also when offering a soothing drink to a grieving friend.” It is a quality I strive for in my work, as well as in myself. I endeavor to add ease to the lives of others through my everyday interactions and through the work of my hands. I want the works I create to bring a brightness to the mundane tasks of our daily lives and to make those tasks easier and more enjoyable.



## *Completion by Use*

Many feel that “beauty is greatest when an object best serves its purpose.” (Norton 111) This idea is central in my beliefs about my work. The destiny of each piece is only fulfilled once it is held and used. It lives to serve. Upon serving its purpose, a piece will hopefully find its way into regular use, become part of everyday life, and ideally become a small part of someone’s family. Even if it is only used periodically, the hope is that it will become a recognizable part of the life of an individual or family. Ideally it will become “part of the furniture of our daily lives and an indicator of our personas – elegant or casual, literal or metaphorical, traditional or modern. Pottery as a vessel for cuisine identifies us with our cultures as strongly as our food and eating habits do...Tablewares become associated with certain events and people. They can be very intimate, as in having tea with a friend or markers of festive occasions or events.” (Schmitt 110-112) In this respect, the ideal life of my teapot would involve being crafted with care and attention to the aesthetic qualities and functional details. It would then be chosen by someone to whom it speaks. She is drawn to it for some reason and decide to take it home. She locates the perfect spot for it in her kitchen, for it to live when it is not in use. The user takes tea from it as a daily ritual of relaxation, serves “play tea” to her children in it, and shares laughter, tears, and tea with friends, using the teapot to make connections with others.

Many times I hear people express that a piece, is just “too pretty to use.” While I appreciate the compliment in that statement, it saddens me to know that a pot will not meet its full potential. On the contrary, when I come across a



person who has employed my pots in his or her home, and who kindly shares with me the ways in which they are used and the joy that they have added, I am filled with pride. Cardew relates, “There is a temptation to put it on a shelf to be looked at, and not to do anything so risky as actually to use it...The Creator does not say to himself, ‘This egg – or this peach – is only going to be broken and destroyed by some act of human gluttony. Why should I make it so well...The gods don’t neglect to make children as beautiful as possible simply because they are destined eventually to grow old and die. If they started treating the world in this way, ‘the sun and moon would both go out’; and if potters followed this advice all pleasure would be gone out of our contacts with utensils. Even on its shelf the teapot will only be safe for a little longer; and the longer it remains out of use and circulation the less interesting and alive it will become.” (Cardew 241) This relates again to the *life* factor. To reach its potential, a piece must be employed in its intended manner. Only then does it fulfill its destiny. And its fate is even more sealed once the user, after repeated employment of the item, becomes so accustomed to using it, that he or she no longer worries that it will be broken, rather simply appreciates its beauty and ease of use.

I am aware that it is not likely that all the pots I create are used. This saddens me but then I realize that people appreciate things in different ways. It is my hope that my pieces will be appreciated because of the beauty, ease, and comfort they offer. This is only possible if they are used. As Robin Hopper relates in his book on the subject of functional pots, “Functional pottery is made for people to use and many potters feel that the pot isn’t complete until it is physically used for its job. If it is to do its job totally, it should be efficient, easy to use, comfortable in the hands, and give pleasure to the user at the same time.” (Hopper 103) This is my intention for each pot.



## *Chapter 3: Influences*

Whether I am aware of them or not, my senses are constantly inundated by influences. My work, as well as many other facets of my life are affected by these influences, whether they are visual, aural, historical, philosophical, or otherwise. An important part of being a contemporary artist, is to look back on artists of the past and be aware of how they and their work influence the world and my work in it. Examples of stimuli that have influenced my work are the art and architecture of India, and the work of contemporary ceramists, Dan Finnegan, Ken Sedberry, and Nick Joerling.





## *The Indian Aesthetic*

**T**he forms and design elements of the art and architecture of India influence my work in ways of which I have just recently become aware. Having viewed images of many Indian works for some time, their characteristics were unconsciously recorded in my mind and then studied and later recreated in elements of my pottery. I only became aware of this influence as I was studying Asian Art History and found myself loosely drawing the shapes of the temples and realizing that many of my pots followed the line and shape of these forms. I see the remnants of these forms in the bulbous bowl, bottle, jar and teapot shapes to which I am drawn. These shapes are similar to the Indian Stupa "architecturally a somewhat simple affair, being essentially hemispherical piled-up funerary mound of brick or stone, within which was embedded a sacred relic." (Gray 41) The Stupa at Sanchi is an example of this domed form, as are the Tomb of Sher Shah Sur, Sasaram, Bihar, and the Prayer Hall from the mosque of Abu Amjad, Bara Gumbad, Delhi. Many of the Prayer Halls are topped with one or multiple examples of this bulbous structure.



FIGURE 1 – THE GREAT STUPA AT SANCHI

Similarly, many Indian Temples such as the Star Temple in Mysore, the Jain Temples in Mount Abu, the Lingaraja Temple in Bhubaneswar, and perhaps the most famous, the Taj Mahal, show similar rounded forms in the mushroom-like crown. Atop the crowns of these temples are layered knob details that have influenced the finial shapes on many of my lid-decked vessels such as teapots and jars. These smaller versions of the many bulbous shapes piled on one another in pyramidal fashion occur often in my work. The Fort at Agra and the Mausoleum of the Emperor Humayun at Deli are clear examples of this bulbous, beadlike element. Though many of these elements are found in places of ceremony and sanctity, I have taken some of their details and made pieces that can be appreciated in a secular, everyday world.

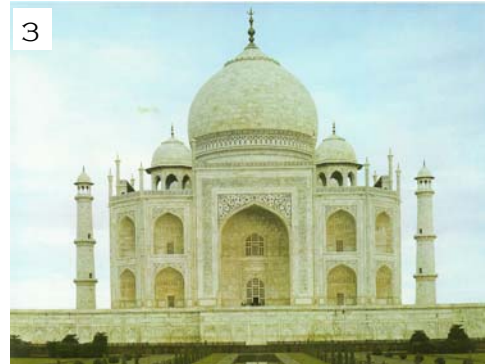
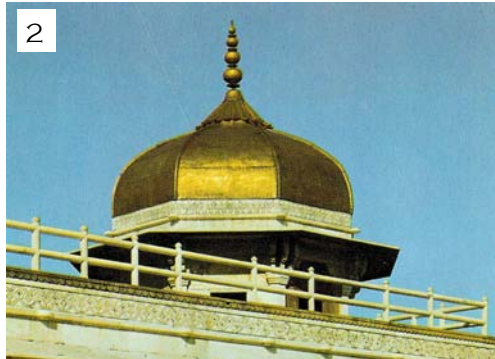


FIGURE 2 – CROWN DETAIL FROM THE FORT AT AGRA  
 FIGURE 3 – THE TAJ MAHAL AT AGRA  
 FIGURE 4 – CROWN DETAILS FROM CHITRAGUPTA  
 TEMPLE AT KHAJURAHO  
 FIGURE 5 – TEMPLE JAR (FINIAL DETAIL SHOWN)  
 FIGURE 6 – TEAPOT (FINIAL DETAIL SHOWN)



## Contemporary Artists

I have been influenced artistically, and philosophically, by contemporary ceramists. I examine works by other potters as an exercise in growth and appreciation. Sometimes I am drawn to other potters' work, sometimes not. But examining art can help me to use my critical eye on my own work as well.

Dan Finnegan is a contemporary artist who was influential in my earliest stages as a potter. He led a two and a half week long class at Penland School of Craft called, *Good Pots for Good Food* that focused on “food friendly, well-crafted, expressive wheel thrown pots.” Under his instruction, my confidence in the craft increased exponentially, though I was still very much a beginner. His instruction helped to greatly increase my skill and comfort with clay.

I was inspired by Finnegan's philosophies regarding his approach to the craft and the quality of functionality. His demonstrations not only showed skills and techniques, but the zeal with which he makes his work. Of his approach he said, “I always have very strong ideas of what the forms are going to be before I make the pots. I'm interested in making pots that people can use, so...I've sort of built a little series of limits to what I will and will not do, and then within there I think there are lots of opportunities for exploration.” (Dan Finnegan's Studio Pottery Page)

Finnegan's feelings on “the sweet magic that occurs when good food and good pots come together,” (Local Artist Profile Page: Dan Finnegan) help solidify the argument for functionality. I agree that being mindful of the use and the user of each pot, gives each piece an importance of its own. Of his work he expressed, “My aim is to make useful pots



that are well crafted using simple tools and labor intensive methods. My hope is that my work helps to add richness to the rituals of everyday life.” (Local Artist Profile Page: Dan Finnegan) My hopes for my work are along these same lines. Dan Finnegan was the first potter with whom I discussed these ideas and his knowledge and instruction at this formative time were significant to my growth as a potter.

North Carolina potter Nick Joerling’s whimsical, animated designs draw me in as examples of functional pottery with a vibrant spirit. I have seen pottery that is static, with so much emphasis on function, that the flare of design is lost. This is not so in Joerling’s work. He expresses, “My pot’s source is most often you and I, our bodies. It’s where my cues come from: dance, people seated on a park bench, the cleavage that forms on the inside of a bent elbow.” I am drawn to the fullness of Joerling’s pieces. Their sensuous curves dance as the observer follows the line of the pot. They are soaked in character and personality. His teapots seem to point to the observer, singling him or her out, and convey a message of whimsy in their gestures.

Joerling’s surface treatments are also a compelling element of his work. His splashes of color subtly emphasize a move of the figural hip or a bend of the arm. I also find myself using a semi-neutral pallet as a background for dramatic instances of color. Like Joerling, I want that neutral area to be intriguing by itself, so the treatment I use, though somewhat understated, has depth and texture. Joerling punctuates his backgrounds with surprising uses of color which add to the fanciful nature of each piece.



FIGURE 7 – NICK JOERLING TEAPOTS  
IMAGE FROM NICK JOERLING ARTIST PAGE  
[HTTP://WWW.CAROLINACLAYGUILD.COM/EVENTS/JOERLING/TEAPOTS.HTML](http://www.carolinaclayguild.com/events/joerling/teapots.html)



Ken Sedberry is another potter whose use of color against a subtle background creates an intriguing sense of depth. The neutral background is dramatic in itself, with movements of color from white to orange to brown, creating a canvas on which to incorporate vibrant colors. Sedberry achieves this in a wood kiln. Of this he says, “Wood-fired pots are traditionally earthen-colored subdued, reserved and muted colors which are beautiful. My goal, however, has been to achieve color in wood firing - colors which combine with the conventional wood-firing hues to create surfaces not unlike those found in Nature's wildest fauna, flora and oceans!” (Ken Sedberry’s Artist Page.)

The forms of Sedberry’s functional pottery are strong yet sensuous. His pitcher is particularly striking to me. The fullness of the belly and the relationship of spout and lip to foot create a pleasing line. The glaze treatment serves to move the eye upward and gives a hint of the organic, perhaps plant or ocean life. Sedberry’s approach to form and surface design create a complete and pleasing composition, a quality that I strive for in my work.

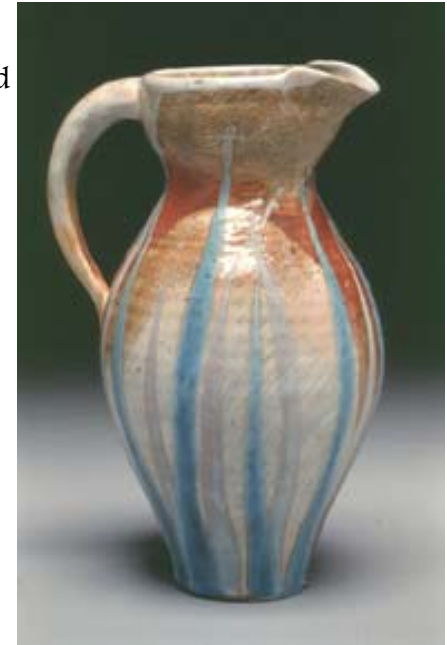


FIGURE 8 – PITCHER BY KEN SEDBERRY  
IMAGE FROM KEN SEDBERRY ARTIST PAGE

[HTTP://WWW.SEDBERRYPOTTERY.COM/WORKS/INFO/B1.HTML](http://www.sedberrypottery.com/works/info/b1.html)



## *Chapter 4: Process*

The transformation from lump of clay to finished pot is a process with many steps. Potters approach this process in various ways, with different ideas, techniques, and philosophies. The intention of my work is to create wheel-thrown, functional pottery, designed to be used and enjoyed often. To achieve this I employ a variety of techniques.



## *The Teapot*

**I**n my study of functional pots one item, the teapot, has continually captured my imagination and excitement the most. It is a piece that can draw in the observer and one that has the potential if well conceived and crafted to improve the quality of life for the user, if only for the brief moment in which it is used. David Brin expressed the joy he experienced in the use of a teapot he discovered while house-sitting for a friend. He spoke of finding and using the “beautifully crafted teapot” saying, “I soon discovered that this teapot was a joy to use. It was the perfect size for one person, making about two mugfuls of tea. It poured without spilling (a test that too few teapots pass). It was delightful to hold and look at.” (Brin 65) Upon reading these lines, I realized what a sense of pride and honor I would feel if someone felt for one of my teapots the way Brin felt about his. In the process of creating a teapot, I keep this feeling in mind. I think of how I wish to offer the pleasure Brin felt to someone else and hope that they might use such kind words to describe using my teapot.

Though I craft various other forms and enjoy making many different types of pots, the teapot is by far my favorite to create. The process of producing a teapot that is both useful and visually intriguing is a constantly stimulating challenge. Each time I make a teapot, it requires the exploration of new thoughts and ideas in order to continually enhance the design and improve upon the utility of the piece. Each of the numerous parts of the teapot requires singular



consideration and consideration of how it will influence the whole pot upon completion. Creating a teapot involves visual study, thought, and response to the feeling each added part reveals.

After intense study of the innumerable possibilities of teapot designs, I have settled into a basis for my own teapot style. It is merely a starting point from which the rest of the features of the teapot are drawn. I enjoy a bulbous teapot body, sometimes round, sometimes ovular. Influences for this preference come from the forms of Indian architecture such as the Stupa and Temple features, as previously discussed. Many times the teapot body starts with a closed form that is opened and manipulated. A large hoop handle mirrors the bulbousness of the body while also offering pleasing negative space in which to showcase an interesting knob on the lid. The knob designs are often reminiscent of miniature architectural features from India. Placement of the spout is always an important consideration for both functionality and design. Each teapot requires scrutiny of the many details that go into its making.

Because this process is so appealing and challenging to me, I have chosen to discuss the technical aspects of my work through the lens of creating a teapot. The teapot requires the use of nearly all the skills I have acquired in this craft; therefore, I hope discussing the techniques in this way will help to paint a clearer picture of the process. The methods involved in all of the pots I create are similar, so the technical information discussed here is applicable to the entire body of my work.





## *Forming*

**T**he raw material of my work is clay. I use stoneware clay of varying body colors, from a buttery white, to a speckled buff or brown. What makes a clay a stoneware clay is the necessity of high-firing. Stoneware clay must be fired to at least 2228° Fahrenheit to reach its proper qualities of color, strength, and vitrification.

Once the clay is selected, I wedge the clay on a plaster or canvas surface. This kneading serves to remove air and set the clay into a shape that is appropriate for the piece. Nearly all of my work is produced on the wheel. Depending on the complexity of the piece, it may require many different parts, some thrown, some hand-built. My teapot design requires a thrown teapot body, lid, lid knob, and spout as well as a pulled and shaped handle.

The body of my teapot is usually a closed form, either spherical or ovoid. Making a closed form is challenging but fun. After centering the clay on the wheel, I open and pull a bulbous form. I am conscious of keeping the mouth as narrow as possible to ensure that it will close. Once the desired rounded shape is achieved, I slowly begin to close the top. Alternating between squeezing the neck in and pulling allows the mouth to close and remain at a consistent thickness. I leave a small lip of clay at the top to aid in the closing, and the final step is pinching that lip off and smoothing the surface with a rib, a thin piece of metal, wood, or plastic.

Next I construct the lid. It is very important to me that the lid and knob make sense to the body of the teapot. The knob is an important detail and must be created intentionally to enhance the teapot's design. The hoop shape of the



handle frames the knob in such a way that gives it added importance; therefore, I take time to make sure it works in the composition. I throw the lid from the knob down because the knob is the most aesthetically important part of the lid. It is an intriguing design feature and it is the piece that will be touched the most; therefore, it must be pleasing to the eye and to the hand. My knobs are heavily influenced from Indian design. They consist of many rings, bulbs, and domes, as many of the Temples of India display. To create the knob I use my fingers to form domes and rings, and then enhance them with a small piece of a metal rib, which has three different angles and is useful for smoothing and forming in small bends. I then shape the slender portion which the fingers will grab and then form the lid and flange. The lid below the knob can be flat, rounded, or concave. I make multiple lids for each pot and try them out before fitting them to see which best enhances the design. Making a closed form body allows me to use any lid because the opening for the lid is cut after the lid is formed. This allows for a good fit, and no exact measurement is required.

Spouts are treated in much the same manner. I throw and hand-build multiple spouts in order to produce the right one for each teapot. I also produce many handles to make sure I achieve the correct roundness and thickness to enhance the teapot. I pull my handles then shape them into the rounded hoop, and then lay them on a board to stiffen before attaching.

Once all the parts have been produced, I trim them to create a desirable foot design, lid fit, curve, or other element. The trimming is accomplished by returning the teapot body to the wheel and re-centering it. Often I tap the pot on center and then use clay, foam, or a terrycloth toilet seat cover to help me hold the pots in place while trimming. I



also employ the use of a very precise re-centering device called the Giffin Grip, which uses three adjustable feet positioned equal intervals to catch the pot and hold it on center. I place the rounded teapot body upside down in a flared cylinder that has been bisque fired to hold it while I trim the foot. I then turn it right side up and trim and fit the lid.

Fitting the lid requires measuring the base of the lid with calipers and then making a circular opening of that size in the top of the teapot body. I make the opening with a needle tool, holding it in place as the wheel spins. I then go over the opening with my sponge to soften any rough edges.

After trimming each part and allowing all pieces to dry to the leather hard stage (when the pot is still damp but firm enough to hold its shape when handled), the attachments are added by scoring both the piece and the attachment with a needle tool or serrated rib and then applying slip (watered-down clay) to the attachment points. Many potters choose to leave the point of attachment somewhat rough to accentuate the intention of their attachment and the handmade quality of the piece. I generally try to smooth my attachments to make them seem congruent with the pot and enhance the whole piece. Sometimes I will embellish the attached area, such as the teapot handle. It is often a sensible place to add an accent of some kind, which can serve to tie the whole piece together visually.

Once complete, the piece is allowed to dry slowly to the bone dry stage, at which time it is ready to be bisque fired. I bisque fire to cone 06, or around 1800° Fahrenheit. Some potters fire hotter or cooler, but I find that an 06 bisque takes the pots to a desirable porosity, allowing for proper absorption of glazes. After a piece is bisque fired, it is no longer able to be dissolved in water but can still absorb some moisture.



## Glazing

Once the ware is bisque fired, it is ready for glazing. Prior to glazing I sponge off my pots to remove any dust and then wax them. The wax serves as a resist to the glaze, allowing some areas to remain unglazed and prevent pots from being glazed to kiln shelves during the final firing. I use hot paraffin wax in a skillet to wax the bottoms of pots without feet, such as mugs. I use cold Forbes wax painted on with a sponge brush to wax pots with feet, such as bowls and plates, and for lids. For the bottoms of pots I want a nice clean wax line so I will achieve a nice clean line of glaze. I wax lids and lid seats where they meet so they will not be glazed together. It is a good idea when possible to fire lids on the pots with which they belong. Firing them together allows them to warp and shrink in support of each other, thereby continuing to fit together well. If the entire lid and pot were both glazed, they would get stuck together when the glaze melted during the firing. Therefore, you must wax to avoid glazing certain parts or wipe the glaze away from these areas prior to firing.

I apply glazes in many ways including dipping, painting, trailing, and spraying. A typical glaze treatment may require a combination of these techniques. Often I may spray a glaze or oxide on the whole body of a pot and then add accents of trailed glazes or other sprayed layers. I like to use neutral backgrounds and then add splashes of color in areas of interest. I am influenced by the surface treatments employed by potters, Ken Sedberry, Nick Joerling, and Suze Lindsey. Each uses touches of color to enhance the forms he or she creates. Joerling writes, “The kind of brush decorat-



ing I do serves a couple of purposes: it's a way to bring color to a pot, and it adds, or accentuates, movement.”

(Morgenthal 114). Though she uses a limited color palette, Suze Lindsay employs her surface enhancements to accentuate the sensuous qualities of her forms. Ken Sedberry uses the trailing effect on many of his taller vessels such as pitchers. Applied on these forms, Sedberry's glaze treatment works perfectly with the shape and movement of the design, creating a harmonious composition. As Leach explained, “The application of pattern, singly or in repetition, should be strictly determined by the need of the shape for further orchestration. Generally speaking, decoration should be subordinate to form but not at the price of dull uniformity.” (Leach 39) The surface treatment selected should complement the form and design elements already present in the piece. Thoughts of the glazing process are with me from the very beginning of a piece, so I know as I am creating it how I will enhance it with surface treatments. Many times, in order to achieve this harmony, I will apply long vertical glaze trails on taller pieces, which gives a wheat-like effect, and employ more sweeping, arched strokes to horizontal surfaces such as the outside of a bowl or round bottle. Similarly, I also use a separating glaze atop other glazes to create a crackle effect, often to highlight certain areas. For spherical teapots, I want to accentuate the bulbous quality; therefore, I will glaze to intentionally draw attention to the pot's belly. These details accentuate either the height and upward motion of vertical pieces or the bulbousness of the bodies of fuller pieces.

During the glazing process I am very intentional about precision and cleaning any mistakes. I like very clean lines and this can only be achieved by being somewhat obsessive about sponging off extra glaze in areas where I do not want it. This extra attention to detail can help achieve the effects I desire.



## *Firing*

**T**he firing process is a long and dramatic one. Loading is a delicate dance of trial and error to fit in the most pots in places that will offer desirable effects. In a glaze firing, pots can not touch each other as they can during the bisque. If a pot is touching another pot they will glaze together; therefore, proper loading is essential. I fire a cone 9-10 (2336-2381° Fahrenheit) reduction firing. Reduction refers to the amount of oxygen in the kiln. In a reduction firing, the amount of oxygen is reduced at a determined temperature. This results in a less efficient, oxygen-starved burn. The fire then turns to elements in the clay and glazes for its oxygen, creating specific effects. Cones measure temperature and duration of heat. Packs of cones are placed in the kiln to help me determine the progress of the firing. Key cones are cone 012 (1587° Fahrenheit), at which reduction is started, and cones 9 and 10 (2336-2381° Fahrenheit) that tell me when to turn off the kiln. The firing process begins with a preheating or “candling” period. This can be done with one to four of the gas burners going overnight, or for just a few hours. Once all the burners have been on for 3-5 hours, I then begin monitoring the color inside the kiln and the cones to watch for the 012 cone to begin to soften and bend. When it does, I close the damper a little and increase the gas to create a reduction atmosphere in the kiln. Two signs of reduction are a distinct smell and flames shooting out of the peep holes. This heavy reduction is kept up for about an hour, and then the damper is pulled out a little to lessen the reduction. I keep a reduction atmosphere throughout the whole firing, but at this point it does not need to be as strong. I watch for the flames in the peep holes to



lessen a bit. Once I achieve a steady low reduction, the kiln can continue in this manner until it reaches the target temperature. This may take up to ten more hours. Once I see that the cone 9 is bent and the cone 10 is softening, I will lessen the gas to take the atmosphere out of reduction and back into oxidation for five minutes to create a clean burn. After this five minute oxidation period, I turn off the burners and allow the kiln to cool for 24-36 hours.



## *Chapter 5: Conclusion*

Working in clay is a vital part of my life and one of the ways that I express the workings of my soul. It is my desire that these expressions make connections with people, and through those connections, perhaps add a small amount of happiness to their lives. Potter Cynthia Bringle relates, “I like to make functional ware and I like to think that my pieces are being used, not collecting dust.” (Coyne 120) To put it a little less bluntly, it brings me great joy to think that the works of my hands might bring joy to others. In order to achieve that, I attempt to create visually intriguing and pleasing designs that serve a functional use in the home. Pottery has been an integral part of people’s lives throughout history, and I feel honored that something I create is chosen to be included in the lives of people today.

My work explores vessel forms and surface decoration that accentuates the natural quality of the medium. “Pottery in its pure form relies neither on sculptural additions nor on pictorial decorations, but on the counterpoint of form, design, colour, texture and the quality of the material, all directed to a function. This function is the uses of the home. Compared with most of the other arts it is a private and domestic art.” (Cardew 244) I agree with Cardew’s assessment and would add to the descriptors of private and domestic the idea that pottery is a personal art; an art that makes connections. “In an age of mass-produced goods and products that are becoming more and more uniform, handmade objects offer a sense of uniqueness and connection...” (Schmitt 112) These connections are vital to what I consider the purpose of my work. Connections are made between the potter and the clay, the potter and each piece, the pot and the fire, and, hopefully, if the piece achieves its aim, the pot and the user.





## Catalogue

This catalogue represents works from the MFA Exhibition, *A Blending of Purpose*, held at the Carroll Reece Museum on the campus of East Tennessee State University on November 4—22, 2004. Each piece was crafted from a brown stoneware clay and high fired in a gas reduction kiln. The pieces in the exhibition were created from January to October, 2004.

It was important to me to show the pieces in scenes in which they would be used, rather than in formal display only. I created two main scenes in the exhibition, a table setting and a tea service. These scenes served as focal areas and were surrounded by supportive displays of singular works. My intention for the scenes was to create a welcoming suggestion of an environment for use of the pots and to show how the works could be incorporated into daily life. In creating these windows of use, I hoped to invite people to feel comfortable among the work, even so much as to pick it up and examine it.



FIGURE 9 – EXHIBIT GUESTS VIEWING TABLE SETTING

No. 1



### THE TABLE SETTING

The Table Setting was the central focal area in the exhibit. It displayed works as the might be found on the dinner table in a family's home. Works on the table included Ocean Green Dinner Plates, Ocean Green Bread Plates, Ocean Green Flora Bowls, Flora Tumblers, Flora Pitcher 3, Tower Vase, Wheat Bodied Oil Lamps, Salt and Pepper Tray, and an Oil Lamp Center Piece.

No. 2



### THE TEA SERVICE

The Tea Service was a second scene of pots in use. It portrayed a comfortable setting where two people might relax over tea. Works included Flora Tea Service, Flora Mugs, and Oil Lamps.

No. 3



### FLORA TEA SERVICE

This wheel-thrown teapot with four cups sits on a thrown and altered serving tray. I warmed the color of the clay by spraying iron oxide and a bone ash glaze. I then employed a vertical trailing to enhance the height and bulbous quality of the form. The cups are shaped and glazed to compliment the form of the teapot, creating a complete composition.

No. 4



### OCEAN BLUE BOWL

This large open bowl was wheel-thrown. Its open quality invited me to choose a striking glaze for the inside of the bowl. I chose a matte turquoise for its sparkling water-like shine. I sprayed the outer portion with iron oxide and bone ash glaze and employed sweeping white streaks of separating glaze.

No. 5



#### FLORA NESTING BOWLS (UN-NESTED)

I presented three sets of Nesting Bowls in the Exhibition. This set was displayed un-stacked to show the shape and glaze treatments, while the others were displayed stacked to show their nesting quality. These bowls were wheel-thrown and the glaze treatment included sprayed layers of iron oxide and bone ash glaze, and vertical glaze trails.

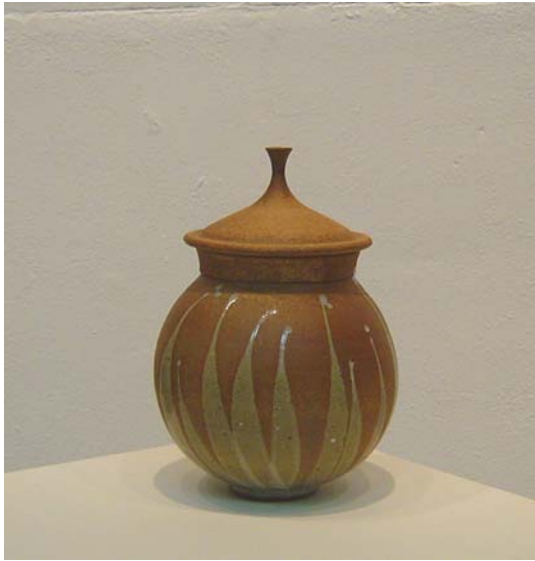
No. 6



#### WHEAT BODIED TEA SERVICE

This wheel-thrown teapot, cream pitcher, and sugar dish start with a bulbous form, to which I add a thrown lid and hand-built spout and handles. The knobs of the lids show the Indian influence in my work. The surface is sprayed with iron oxide and bone ash glaze and trailed with a separating glaze to create the waving wheat-like stripes.

No. 7



#### WHEAT BODIED JAR

This jar is wheel-thrown and treated in much the same manner as the Wheat Bodied Tea Service. Its knob is a bit simpler convex shape. The surface was similarly treated with iron oxide and bone ash with separating glaze trails.

No. 8



#### FLORA PITCHERS 1 AND 2

Here are two examples of pitcher forms. They are different in shape but have been treated similarly on the surface. The bodies of the pitchers are wheel-thrown and the handles are pulled and added. I have sprayed iron oxide and bone ash glaze and used vertical glaze trails to accentuate the movement of the forms.



No. 9



### GREEN EARTH PLATTER

Large platter forms are challenging and compelling to me. They offer an expanse of surface design possibilities. I have chosen the simple concentration of color in the central area on a earth-toned backdrop. The earthy color is achieved by spraying a layer of bone ash glaze over a layer of iron oxide.

No. 10



### FLORA CREAM AND SUGAR TRAY

This cream pitcher and sugar dish echo many of the pitcher forms by which I am compelled. I have employed the vertical stripes of glaze to draw the eye upward. The serving tray was constructed of thrown and altered disks.

*No. 11*



### SEA GREEN PLATTER

Here is another large platter on which I have applied a mottled green glaze in the center and the bone ash over iron combination on the bottom. The swirling center and speckled green give the feeling of algae or ocean life.

*No. 12*



### CRACKLE OCEAN PLATTER

This wheel-thrown platter also has an ocean like quality, aided by the turquoise color and swirling center. I have applied a separating glaze adding a crackling effect to the outer rim.

No. 13



### OCEAN BLUE AND OCEAN GREEN TRAYS

I displayed two thrown and altered trays in the exhibit. These pieces are created by throwing varying sized discs on the wheel and the cutting and joining them together. I then alter the edges and add handles to either side. The glaze treatment employs dramatic colors over the iron and bone ash background.

No. 14



### TURQUOISE JAR

This small jar was wheel-thrown. The knob is reminiscent of the tops of the Indian Temples that inspire me. Here I have used the bone ash glaze in a different manner. I poured it inside and dipped the lower edge of the lid and the top edge of the pot in it. In these areas it is thicker than on the pots I have sprayed with it. When this glaze is thicker it is a milky white with flecks of orange, much like a shino glaze. Similarly I dipped the top of the lid and bottom portion of the jar in a turquoise matte glaze.



*No. 15*



### FLORA TUMBLERS AND MUGS

Here are examples of two types of wheel-thrown drinking vessels, the handled mug and the handle-less tumbler. Both have been treated with sprayed bone ash over iron oxide and vertical trails of glaze to add splashes of color.

*No. 16*



### FACETED TEA FOR FOUR

This wheel-thrown teapot with four cups employs the same splashes of color over the iron oxide and bone ash combination. In the throwing however I have altered the shape of the teapot by faceting the upper and lower halves separately to create an angular quality. The final shape of the knob shows the influence of Indian Architecture.

*No. 17*



#### TEMPLE JAR

This is an early jar form with the finial shape highly inspired by Indian Architecture. The body of this pot was sprayed with iron oxide only, and only a few splashes of color were added to create movement. It is pleasingly simplistic in its nature.

*No. 18*



#### GREEN EARTH COMMUNION SET

As the wife of a minister, the Communion Set has become a familiar fixture in my life. The Chalice is a very important symbol in many faith traditions, and the Paten goes along with that and serves to hold the elements of the Eucharist. I have treated these pieces in the same manner as most of my works, with concentrations of color over the neutral iron oxide and bone ash back-drop.

No. 19



#### CRACKLE TEA SERVICE FOR FOUR

This wheel-thrown teapot with four cups sits on a thrown and altered serving tray. I have altered the teapot body by faceting the most round portion, adding an angular quality. I have treated these surfaces a bit differently by covering the entire surface in a solid color and then adding bands of separating glaze to accentuate certain areas. I have emphasize the most bulbous or most concave areas.

No. 20



#### CONCAVE CRACKLE PITCHER AND CRACKLE CREAM AND SUGAR TRAY

These items are treated in a similar way to Crackle Tea Service for Four. I have added separating glaze to areas of interest to create a crackle effect, drawing attention to these areas.

No. 21



### OCEAN WAVES PLATTER

This platter is similar to the basic shape of many of the others, but I have manipulated the rim in a wave design. The turquoise glaze sparkles and shimmers and works with the swirling center to create an ocean feel. The outer rim and underside are treated with the iron oxide and bone ash spray.

No. 22



### FLORA JARS 1 AND 2

The jar shape has innumerable possibilities. Here are two jar forms, each with finial designs that echo designs found in Indian Architecture. Again the bone ash over iron oxide is used as a canvas on which to add splashes of color.

No. 23



### WHEAT BODIED TEA SERVICE 2

This wheel-thrown teapot and cream and sugar tray are more vertical in nature compared to the more bulbous teapot bodies. To emphasize this quality I have employed long sweeping vertical swipes of separating glaze on top of the iron oxide and bone ash base. This creates a wavy wheat-like design.

No. 24



### WHEAT BODIED BOWLS 1 AND 2

Here are two wheel-thrown bowl forms. The top bowl is a wider, more open shape, and the bottom bowl is more vertical. The addition of the wheat-like stripes works well on both shapes to give a lift to the pot. I have applied the bone ash glaze in a thick layer on the insides of both bowls to get a milky white color with specks of brown and orange.

No. 25



### SEA GRASS TEA SET FOR THREE

This is an early ovular teapot form with three ovular cups. An iron oxide spray was applied to the entire surface of the pots, and the wide stripes of color were added to achieve this sea grass effect.

No. 26



### FACETED TEA SERVICE

This tea service contains an elongated teapot, cream pitcher, and sugar dish on a tray. Each piece is faceted on the top and bottom to give them a congruency. The faceting creates an angular quality, which is visually interesting in itself, so a simplistic glaze treatment was added. I sprayed the iron oxide and bone ash combination and then added small areas of color around the rims and knobs of each piece.



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# VITA

## EDUCATION

- 2000      **Bachelor of Arts** in Communication, *summa cum laud*, Mars Hill College, Mars Hill, NC  
            **Grayson Scholarship**, 1996-2000, logged over 400 hours of community service
- 2004      **Master of Fine Arts** in Ceramics, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 1997      **Internship**, Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, Asheville, NC
- 1998      **Internship**, City of Asheville Festivals Division, Bele Chere Festival, Asheville, NC
- 2000-2002      **Administrative Assistant** for Communication and Graphic Design, Woodmont Christian Church, Nashville, TN
- 2002-2003      **Tuition Scholarship**, Service-Learning Center, ETSU, Johnson City, TN
- 2003-2004      **Tuition Scholarship in Ceramics**, Department of Art and Design, ETSU, Johnson City, TN
- 2004      **Tuition Scholarship** for Instruction of Foundations Course, Three-Dimensional Design, Department of Art and Design, ETSU, Johnson City, TN

## SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 2001      **"Sculpting Peace,"** Children's Workshop in Response to Events of September 11, 2001, Nashville, TN
- 2003      **"Highlands Craft Fair,"** Highlands, NC  
            **"Blue Plum Festival,"** Johnson City, TN, *Juried*  
            **"Seize the Clay,"** Student Ceramic Exhibition, Nelson Fine Art, Johnson City, TN  
            **"Form and Folly,"** Student Sculpture Exhibition, Nelson Fine Art, Johnson City, TN
- 2004      **"A Blending of Purpose,"** MFA Thesis Exhibition, Carroll Reece Museum, ETSU, Johnson City, TN  
            **"Sourwood Festival,"** Black Mountain, NC  
            **Solo Exhibition**, Woodmont Christian Church, Nashville, TN  
            **"Seize the Clay II,"** Student Ceramic Exhibition, Nelson Fine Art, Johnson City, TN

## SELECTED HONORS

- 1998-2000      Sigma Tau Delta, National English Honor Society, Mars Hill College, Mars Hill, NC
- 1999-2000      Vice President, Student Government Association Senior Class, Mars Hill College, Mars Hill, NC  
                    Alpha Chi, National Honor Society, Mars Hill College, Mars Hill, NC
- 2002-2003      President, Student Ceramic Association, ETSU, Johnson City, TN

